

## **CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Jennifer Mitchell, Ensuring quality standards in Kentucky health care**

During the 22 years Jennifer Mitchell has dedicated to nursing, she has always kept in mind her favorite credo: "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibilities of our future."

In July 2004, Mitchell was appointed director of the Office of Inspector General's Division of Health Care Facilities and Services and assumed responsibility for a 145-person staff that licenses and regulates all health care facilities and services in the Commonwealth. Currently, there are 2,846 facilities and services licensed to provide 44 various types of health care, including hospitals and nursing facilities, outpatient clinics for health services such as kidney dialysis, rural health facilities, laboratories and home health agencies.

The division also investigates allegations of poor care and services and imposes sanctions on facilities cited for poor performance. Last year alone, 1,354 complaints were received and investigated. Staff members also monitor the facilities and services the division licenses and regulates through regular on-site surveys for compliance with state and federal requirements.

Mitchell credits her mother with instilling in her at a very early age the importance of honesty, responsibility and a solid work ethic and values.

"During my 22 years in the health care field, I have spent a significant amount of time with hospital and nursing home patients who taught me about the true gifts of life," said Mitchell. "A simple smile, hand shake, or just a short visit can enhance someone's life. That is probably one of the most rewarding feelings an individual can experience."

"I am very fortunate to work in an atmosphere of such dedicated and hardworking people. Our Inspector General, Robert J. Benvenuti, III, has a terrific management team that accepts only professional efficiency from the people who work in OIG," said Mitchell. "It's a great feeling to be part of a team that promotes a strong work ethic and strives to enhance Kentucky health care services."

Prior to her appointment as director, Mitchell served as a staff assistant to the Inspector General from 2002-04, focusing on organization of health care compliance programs, state and federal investigation procedures and

other operational issues. She also coordinated and conducted educational programs for health care providers and the state survey agency.

After Mitchell received her nursing degree in 1983 from Kentucky State University, she began her nursing career at King's Daughters Hospital in Frankfort.

In 1987 Mitchell went to work as a nurse consultant inspector for the Office of Inspector General and was promoted to assistant director of the state's survey agency in 1995. During her career with the OIG, she has received extensive training and education through the Health Care Finance Administration and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and was instrumental in implementing many federal programs for the state survey agency and provider industry.

Mitchell spent six of her 22-year health care career as an independent regulatory compliance and crisis intervention consultant. During that time she was also a member of the facility standards committee for the Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities and a consultant to the Kentucky Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.

"Mitchell brings years of experience and expertise in the field of health care regulatory compliance to her leadership position in OIG," said Benvenuti. "While we might not like to think about it, nearly everyone will be treated or reside in a health care facility sometime during his or her lifetime and with this in mind, Kentuckians should rest easier knowing that Mitchell is ensuring regulatory compliance in health care facilities throughout the state."

Mitchell enjoys spending her leisure time scrapbooking and being with family and friends.

## **CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: Medicaid Honors Employees**

*Photo: Karen Sayles (left), Claims Assistance Branch, and Division of Medicaid Services Commissioner Shannon R. Turner.*

The Department for Medicaid Services distributed its quarterly Medicaid Recognition Awards at an all-employee staff meeting June 27 in the Health Services Auditorium.



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Anyone who contributes in a meaningful way to the mission of Kentucky Medicaid, ensuring quality health services for Kentucky's 691,000 Medicaid members is eligible for a Medicaid recognition award. A seven-member panel reviewed 29 nominations to select seven winners.

All nominees receive a framed certificate from Medicaid commissioner Shannon R. Turner commending their contributions to the program. Nominators are also encouraged to offer additional tokens of appreciation to their nominees. Turner presented these "tokens" at the awards ceremony. Winners also are honored on a bulletin board in DMS.

"Employee appreciation and recognition are not only the responsibility of management," Turner said. "Kentucky Medicaid views it as everyone's responsibility. It is the value we place on our own careers, the way we interact with one another, the way we recognize and augment the strengths and weaknesses of our coworkers that will be the measure of our contentment, spirit and confidence.

"Our employee recognition program is entirely employee driven. Employees have the final say over who receives the award. I have no influence over the process. The nomination I made didn't even get chosen!"

The winners were:

"You Amaze Me!" Award  
Jan Howell, director,  
Administration and  
Financial Management  
*(pictured at right)*

"My Boss Is Tops!" Award  
Angela Kirkland, director,  
Long-Term Care and  
Community Alternatives

"Ready to Lend a Hand"  
Award

Francis McGraw, branch manager, Eligibility Policy  
Branch

"Outstanding Contributor" Award  
Judy Montfort, R.N., Long -Term Care Branch

"Outstanding Customer Service" Award  
Jennifer Moore, Medicaid specialist

"Teaching By Example" Award  
Stuart Owen, branch manager, Administration Branch



"Best Project Leader" Award

Karen Sayles, branch manager, Claims Assistance Branch

### Manson named executive director for quality

Delanor Manson, R.N.,  
B.S.N., C.N.A., M.A.,  
C.P.H.Q., has been named  
executive director for quality  
for the Cabinet for Health  
and Family Services,  
effective July 11.



Manson has been charged with, among other tasks, designing, organizing and implementing a system of root cause analysis to review adverse and sentinel events within the Department for Community Based Services.

Root cause analysis is a process used by various organizations, including NASA and hospitals, to understand the causes of sentinel events – those that alert organizations to a problem, such as aerospace crashes, medication error, train derailments, etc. The focus is on finding the causes of a situation and ways to ensure it does not recur. Until now, the process has not been used in community-based agencies in Kentucky state government.

"One of our key functions is to protect Kentucky's most vulnerable citizens," said Eugene Foster, Ed.D., undersecretary for children and family services. "The goal of creating this new position is to establish a defined process to examine systems problems and make improvements to help prevent them from happening again. Delanor is uniquely qualified to act as both a consultant and a coordinator to take the process currently in place to a higher level."

"In her role as deputy secretary, Delanor has made invaluable contributions to this Cabinet, and I am thrilled that she is taking on this valuable new role in protecting our most vulnerable citizens," said CHFS Secretary James W. Holsinger Jr., M.D. "Dr. Foster and I have long wanted to establish such a function within the Cabinet, and Delanor is the ideal individual to bring this to fruition."

"I am excited about the potential of root cause analysis to change the way we protect adults and children in the commonwealth," Foster said. "Once implemented, this system will leave a legacy in DCBS that will live on."

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Manson said, "I am delighted for the opportunity to work with the Families and Children vertical to develop a critical quality management process."

Manson will continue her role in facilitating and directing the Cabinet's wellness and health promotion program, as well as her work with other state and national agencies and organizations on a variety of projects. Her new office will be located in the L&N Building in Louisville.

### 5 A Day Challenge aims to increase fruit and vegetable consumption

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services continues its employee health and wellness initiative with an emphasis on nutrition beginning July 5. The nutrition emphasis follows a recently concluded eight-week physical activity program called Get Moving, CHFS!, in which teams of Frankfort-based Cabinet employees collectively exercised the equivalent of more than 130,000 miles.



The initiative's focus on nutrition is patterned after the nationally-recognized 5 A Day Challenge program sponsored by Produce for Better Health, the National Cancer Institute and the Centers for Disease Control. Employees in teams of four will compete for prizes by tracking their fruit and vegetable consumption for five weeks. The goal of the program is to encourage participants to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day - the minimum daily recommendation from Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 published jointly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture.

"We hope the concept of team eating will be too tempting a challenge for people to ignore," said Emma Walters, chairwoman of the worksite wellness nutrition subcommittee. "The CHFS 5 A Day Challenge will help us be better informed about the enormous value fruits and vegetables have as part of a healthy lifestyle. By the end of the program, we hope people are eating more fruits and vegetables, even replacing less-healthy foods with more healthy choices and, ultimately, feeling better for it."

Fruits and vegetables provide abundant benefits as part of a healthy diet. Eating five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day may help control blood pressure and diabetes and reduce the risk for cancer, heart disease and stroke. Fruits and vegetables are low in fat and calories and contain fiber, so including them in your daily diet may

help with weight reduction and healthy weight maintenance. There also is compelling evidence that consuming at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day may even help protect against the effects of aging.

The CHFS 5 A Day Challenge kicks off July 5 with a nutrition exhibition at the cabinet's Frankfort headquarters. The exhibition will feature fruit and vegetable displays, cooking demonstrations and nutritional information. The CHFS 5 A Day Challenge will conclude Aug. 18 with a celebration event for participants.

The CHFS Worksite Health and Wellness initiative is designed to help employees improve their personal health through information, education and motivation to encourage healthy lifestyle choices. Future programs will focus on smoking cessation and stress reduction.

### USDA honors DCBS' Food Stamp Program

*By Anya Armes Weber*

The Cabinet's Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) received several Pinnacle Awards at the Tri-Regional Food Stamp conference last month hosted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service in San Antonio, Texas.



The awards recognize state staff members for their commitment and dedication to food stamp clients. DCBS received the following awards:

#### **Excellence in Program Participation and Application**

**Timeliness:** This award is for improved program access. The USDA said DCBS "has improved its application process to deliver food stamp benefits in a timely manner, while at the same time reaching out to the underserved populations." In fiscal year 2003, DCBS' timeliness rate was 98.24 percent. Kentucky was one of six states to earn a national performance bonus for increased participation and timely processing of food stamp applications during that year.

**Accuracy in Grant Closeout Award:** This award is given to the state in each region that has consistently managed its budget. Kentucky not only was the first state in the southeast region to complete the closeout process, but also, the state food stamps program did so without errors.



**Financial Management Award:** The USDA honors the hard work and dedication of Kentucky's accuracy in grant closeout, excellence in electronic benefits transfer reconciliation and accuracy in initial budget projections with this award.

Kentucky's Food Stamp Program is managed by the DCBS Division of Family Support. Staff determines eligibility for the federal program.

## July Fourth among deadliest holidays on roads and highways

*Information provided by the Kentucky State Police*

Kentucky State Police officials advise motorists traveling on Kentucky roadways during the upcoming July Fourth weekend to



use extreme care. Increased traffic is expected throughout the holiday period, which begins at 6 p.m. Friday, July 1, and ends at 11:59 p.m. Monday, July 4.

As part of both Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) and the 100 Days of Summer Heat campaign, KSP will be stepping up enforcement activities with an increased presence in high-crash locations throughout the state. Extra patrols are planned around recreational areas, lakes and boat ramps. For maximum coverage, troopers will also partner with local police and sheriffs' departments to conduct traffic safety checkpoints in strategic locations.

"Please do your part to be safe," said KSP Lt. Eric Walker. "Remember, three out of four crashes happen within 25 miles of home at speeds of 45 miles per hour or less. About 40 percent of all fatal crashes occur on roads where the speed limit is 30 miles per hour or less."

Walker offers these additional driving tips for safe holiday travel:

- Buckle your seat belt and make sure passengers buckle up - it's your best defense in a traffic crash. According to Kentucky law, all children 40 inches tall or less must be buckled into a child safety restraint that meets federal standards. Children taller than 40 inches must wear a seat belt.

- Slow down. Excessive speed reduces your ability to avoid a crash, extends your vehicle's stopping distance and increases severity when crashes do occur.
- Avoid aggressive driving behavior such as tailgating, passing on the shoulder of the road, changing lanes without signaling, ignoring and evading traffic signals and weaving in and out of traffic.
- Be extra attentive in construction zones. Look for the orange warning signs, follow posted speed limits, leave adequate space between vehicles, obey road crew flaggers, watch for workers and be prepared for sudden stops and changing road surfaces and traffic patterns.
- Be aware of your own and others' distracted driving behavior including talking on cell phones and dealing with children.

Citizens can contribute to highway safety during the July Fourth holiday by reporting unsafe drivers to the KSP toll-free hotline at 1-800-222-5555. Callers will remain anonymous and should give a description of the vehicle, location, direction of travel and license number if possible.

## CHFS Health Tip of the Week: Keep your pet safe on July Fourth

*By Anne Parr, R.N.*

Amid all the excitement and festivities of July Fourth celebrations, it's easy to forget Spot and Fluffy may not share our fondness for fireworks. To protect your pet on the Fourth of July, take these precautions:



- **Resist the urge to take your pet to fireworks displays.**
- **Do not leave pets in the car.** With only hot air to breathe inside a car, pets can suffer serious health effects, even death, in a few short minutes. Partially opened windows do *not* provide sufficient air, but *do* provide an opportunity for your pet to be stolen.
- **Keep pets indoors in a safe, quiet area.** Some animals can become destructive when frightened, so be sure to put away items your pet could destroy or that would be harmful to your pet if chewed. Leave a television or radio playing at normal volume to keep pets company while you're attending Fourth of July picnics, parades and other celebrations.
- **If you know your pet is seriously distressed by loud noises like thunder, consult with your veterinarian**

- before July Fourth about safe medical options to help alleviate fear and anxiety pets can experience during fireworks displays.
- **Never leave pets outside unattended, even in a fenced yard or on a chain.** In their fear, pets who normally wouldn't leave the yard may escape and become lost or become entangled in a chain, risking injury or death.
  - **Make sure your pets wear identification tags so if they do become lost, they can be returned promptly.** Animals found running at-large should be taken to the local animal shelter where they will have the best chance of being reunited with their owners.
  - **If you plan to go away for the holiday weekend,** research travel options to best accommodate your pets.
  - If you follow these simple precautions, you and your pet can have a safe and happy Fourth of July.

- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol at least six hours before bedtime.** Caffeine is a stimulant and, although alcohol acts as a depressant initially, it also acts as a stimulant and can disturb your sleep later in the night.

## Employee Enrichment



By Anya Armes Weber

*Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.*

Are you feeling stressed by work or having trouble concentrating on the job? Experts from the Sleep Research Centre of the United Kingdom's Loughborough University say the solution to getting back on track could be as simple as getting a good night's sleep.

Getting enough sleep can be the difference between feeling mentally on top of things and feeling out of control, says Centre Director Jim Horne.

Sleep is vital to the cerebral cortex, the "thinking" part of our brains responsible for memory, speech and sustaining attention. Unlike many organs, the cerebral cortex only turns off when we are asleep. It needs that time to recover and restore neural tissues. Sleeping well rejuvenates your mind which can improve your work performance.

### Here are three tips for sleeping well:

- **Clear your mind at bedtime.** Make a list of anything you're worried about doing the next day. Putting it on paper can clear the list from your head and reassure you that you will remember your tasks.
- **Keep a consistent wake-up time.** This is important even when you go to bed later and will help set your natural body clock.